

# In The Court of History

---

An Apology for Canadians  
who were opposed  
to the

South African War

BY

Goldwin Smith

---

TORONTO  
William Tyrrell & Company  
1902

*The* EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE  
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



*Queen's University at Kingston*

N.A. 181

39/25-01

# In the Court of History

LP  
FB012  
1902  
5648





# IN THE COURT OF HISTORY

AN APOLOGY FOR CANADIANS WHO  
WERE OPPOSED TO THE

## SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

BY  
GOLDWIN SMITH

TORONTO  
WILLIAM TYRRELL & COMPANY  
1902

Entered according to the Act of the Parliament of Canada in the year  
one thousand nine hundred and two, by Goldwin Smith, in  
the office of the Minister of Agriculture.

## PREFACE

**W**HILE the war was going on and war feeling was dominant, expressions of satisfaction and gratitude, some of them of a touching kind, were received from Canadians opposed to the war by a public writer who ventured to use his pen on that side. For such persons these pages are intended. By such persons alone are they likely to be now read, though some historian of Canada may look into them hereafter. They will have served the writer's immediate purpose if they confirm any of those who have shared his views in their convictions as to the past, and in their fidelity to the same principles for the future.





# In the Court of History

To the relief of all who are not lovers of war, the war in South Africa at last came to an end on terms which hold out a better hope of future peace than those which the authors of the war would have imposed. The case is now in the court of history, and it will be in order for each of the parties to the controversy to file its plea while memory is fresh; for that party especially which was conscientiously opposed to the war, and which, though more numerous than its adversaries imagined, has, owing to the prevalence of the war fever, hitherto been imperfectly heard and has laboured under injurious imputations. Questions, too, of permanent importance, such as that of liberty of speech in war time, that of the application of martial law to British colonies, and that of the duty of the colonies to take part in Imperial wars, have been raised in the course of these events, and call for our timely consideration. We may presently have more of these wars, with the burden of

military taxation, which some of us are eager to assume. The spirit of aggressive Imperialism still prevails, and the politician who is the incarnation of that spirit still sways Imperial councils.

Believers in justice, humanity, and respect for the rights of nations, great or small, find themselves confronted here, as in Great Britain, the United States, and other countries, by a party of Imperial aggrandizement in alliance with the craving of capital for new markets. Canada, with her limited population and her very vulnerable position, must surely feel that her strongest bulwark against aggression is respect for international right.

On one point the minds of our people must have been opened since the end of the war. They have all along been told, and have, no doubt, believed, that the Boer was a "barbarian," a "perfidious savage," a "marauder," a "brigand," a "buccaneer," an "assassin," a "cateran," a "dacoit"; that civilized war could not be made with him; that the only way was to treat him as a robber and shoot him down; and that, from this, sickly sentimentalism alone would recoil. They now see the Boer leaders hailed as gallant antagonists by our own generals, welcomed by British Ministers, cheered by

British crowds, honoured by Royalty itself. Is it not possible that they may have been misled on other points by the same organs of information?

Let it be said at once that no question is here raised about the soldier's part in the matter. The soldier is not responsible for the righteousness of the war. His valour, chivalry, and devotion to duty are equally admirable whatever the cause of the war may be. His commander's word is his warrant and his absolution. The Duke of Marlborough bade his soldiers lay waste the country around Munich. The soldier who, in obedience to the command, set fire to the homestead, turning the woman and the child, the aged and the sick, adrift, was blameless. He did what he was bound to do; though he was not bound to take pleasure in his task, to think of it afterwards with pride, or to count it among the glories of the British army. A volunteer, perhaps, enlisting for the particular cause, may be more concerned to satisfy himself of its justice.

The real interest and honour of a nation are inseparable from good faith, equity, and humanity. Those who, deeply impressed with this conviction, deprecated the destruction of the two South African Commonwealths, submit that they in no respect departed from

their duty as citizens. They opposed no war outlay; they in no way interfered with recruiting or with any military measures. They abstained, in Canada at least, from that criticism of the military administration and the generalship in which the war party in England indulged, and which was as likely as any criticism of the war itself to afford encouragement to the enemy. But they maintain that they were not less doing their duty as citizens of a free commonwealth in giving honest counsel to their country. Is it to be the rule that as often as war is proclaimed, perhaps by a majority no larger than that which supported Clay and his Warhawks in 1812, opinion shall be gagged and the national conscience shall be suspended? While the party of peace is silenced, is the party of war to be freely heard? Is it to be heard even when it is most extreme, when it calls for the most inhuman measures, when it thwarts the most reasonable peace? Did not men whose patriotism was above suspicion, such as Chatham and Burke, oppose the war with the American Colonies, not only in its inception, but during its course? Did not their opposition at last bring it to a close when it had become a war not only with the colonists but with the powers of Europe, and when the madness of the King and the servility of his Ministers



would have prolonged it to the ruin of the kingdom? Did not the most patriotic men in the United States, Abraham Lincoln among the number, oppose and condemn the Mexican War while its supporters were shouting "The country, right or wrong"? If ever there was an ardent patriot, Russell Lowell was one. The brightest of his works is his satirical protest against the Mexican War, a war made by a set of unprincipled politicians on fraudulent pretexts for the extension of the Slave Power.

Lord Salisbury now says that in making the Crimean War to uphold Turkish despotism over the countries which it blights, Great Britain laid her money on the wrong horse. Suppose he had said this at the time, would he have been a pro-Russian, a traitor, and a viper? There was no sufficient cause for the Crimean War. Nobody in England had cared at all about the custody of the Holy Places. The nation in general had neither expected nor desired war. But when the first shot was fired, the war fever broke out. Of its fury Tennyson's glowing appeal to passion in his "Maud" is the memorial. Opposition was hounded down as it has been here. Bright was burned in effigy. The press pandered to the fury of the hour. When peace was proclaimed,

one journal went into mourning. Yet the war had not been long ended before it was universally deplored; and Russia was soon allowed without opposition to tear up the treaty restricting her naval action in the Black Sea. The fruits of all the bloodshed and waste at last were the Crimean graves.

Mr. Chamberlain denounced manifestations of a division of national opinion as treasonable encouragement of the Boers. Why, then, did he call forth and accentuate the division of national opinion by holding a general election on the very issue of the war, when he had already a more than sufficient majority in Parliament? Why did he at each succeeding bye-election force the war issue, inevitably with the same effect? Did he expect people to waive their most deeply-seated convictions in order to lend him a show of unanimous support? The general election gave him a decisive majority. Did that shake the resolution of the Boer?

It cannot be denied that domestic opposition impairs war power, and may afford encouragement to the enemy. This check on aggressive ambition is the happy infirmity of free commonwealths. Those who delight in aggressive war should vote for an Emperor. When war is really defensive, there is little fear of disunion. Fox opposed

the war with the French Republic, but took office with Grenville to carry on the war against Napoleon. If bitter Whigs in those days opposed even the war with Napoleon from factious motives, nothing of the kind can be said about Canadian opposition to the South African War, which has been wholly unconnected with party.\*

The Cape was a Dutch Colony, taken in the Revolutionary War, and, after a short cession, retaken by the British, not so much for the purpose of colonization, as because it was a half-way house to India, and a key to the Indian and Australian possessions. The Dutch are a race glorious in the annals of commerce, of finance, of art, of political liberty, of civilization. We owe them lasting gratitude for having sent William of Orange to rescue us from the tyranny of James II. and his army when we could not have saved ourselves. On the day of Camperdown, they wrestled with us sternly

---

\*The writer, were he in England, would rank as a Liberal-Unionist, though not as an Imperialist. He was the president of the Loyal and Patriotic Union, formed here, in opposition to the policy of dismemberment, to uphold the integrity of the United Kingdom, which was surely more vital than the annexation of the Transvaal. No word of his can ever have reached the Boers. If it had, it would have discouraged the continuance of a hopeless though heroic struggle. It was not the writer's fault if the Boer took other counsel of his own heart.

for the dominion of the sea. But this was at a time when they and their fleet had fallen into the grasp of revolutionary France. Mingled with Dutch blood at the Cape was a strain of the not less noble blood of the Huguenot.

The rule of a foreign conqueror, though it may not be bad, though it may even be beneficent, is unbeloved. His improvements are regarded with suspicion, nor are they likely to be always well timed. Great Britain (1834-1836) abolished slavery in all her colonies. The Cape Dutch, not having heard Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, Clarkson, and Buxton, were not so ripe as were the British for the change. Nor was slavery among them so scandalous as it had been in the West Indies. To many of them abolition was ruin. Nor does the compensation, though voted, appear to have been fairly paid. They at least asserted that it was not. The reluctance to concede political equality to coloured people is also laid to their charge by writers of a nation holding in subjection three hundred millions of Hindoos. But there had been general incompatibility and friction. The Boers, a pastoral race, intensely Dutch, passionate lovers of independence, went forth into the wilderness to make for themselves new homes where they



might live in their own way. To those homes they apparently had a good right. The idea that a distant Government could by its fiat close South Africa against mankind seems to be untenable; hardly less so than the claim of the Pope to mete out the maritime world to the Catholic powers.

The position of the Boers as political exiles somewhat resembled that of the founders of Canada. The result of a double secession was the foundation of two little commonwealths, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal, or South African Republic. Small these commonwealths were, as the germ of all greatness must be; rude, as, in its early stage, must be all that is ultimately most refined. The most promising of wild-stocks is wild; the most exquisite of statues was once in the quarry. Boer life, it seems, was so far refined as to have inspired a pastoral poet. That these people were politically barbarians, needing to be civilized by the Anglo-Saxon sword, is the suggestion of our Anglo-Saxon self-esteem. One of the first English publicists of our day studied their politics with respect, and says that "had these two Republics been suffered to continue the normal course of their constitutional development, that development would have been full of interest"; that it might even

“have conveyed valuable information or suggested useful examples to other small commonwealths;” for, “in the scheme of these constitutions, and especially in that of the Free State, there were merits not to be found either in the American or in the British system.” “These simple Free State farmers,” he says, “were wiser in their simplicity than some of the philosophers who have at divers times framed plans of Government for nascent communities.”

The religion of the Boers was a crude, mystical, perhaps fanatical form of old-time Protestantism, not very unlike that of the Scotch Covenanters in bygone days. To the Ritualist it was specially odious, and furious was the language of his war pulpit. Like the Scotch Covenanters, the Boers were called by their enemies hypocrites. But their enemies, like those of the Covenanters, were destined to feel how religion, even when it is not enlightened or refined, can nerve the patriot's arm. Perhaps their simple trust in God as the upholder of what they deemed their righteous cause, was not much less rational or respectable than the appeals of Bishops and priests to the God of Battles, or the *Te Deums* which have been so often sung for the triumphs of iniquity.

“The Boers are not naturally a warlike race. . . They

inherit from their ancestors, the men who won the independence of Holland from the oppressive rule of Philip II. of Spain, their unconquerable love of freedom and liberty. Are these not qualities which commend themselves to men of the English race? Is it against such a nation that we are to be called upon to exercise the dread arbitrament of arms? These men settled in the Transvaal in order to escape foreign rule. They had had many quarrels with the British. They left their homes in Natal as the English Puritans left England for the United States, and they founded a little republic of their own in the heart of Africa. In 1852 we made a treaty with them, and we agreed to respect and guarantee their independence; and I say, under these circumstances, is it possible we could maintain a forcible annexation of the country without incurring the accusation of having been guilty, I will not say of national folly, but I say of national crime." Such in 1881 was the opinion of Mr. Chamberlain.

Mr. Froude, a strong Imperialist, gave to a London paper his impression of the Boers:

"First of all, I must tell you that I think very highly of the Boers. I found them in every instance to be honest, truthful, and God-fearing. Uncorrupted by our

Liberal civilization, they are content as quiet husbandmen to till the soil in South Africa; to raise cattle; in fact, to earn their living rather by hard work than by over-reaching their neighbours, while bringing up their families in pious fashion. Morning and evening, servants and sojourners assemble with the family to hear a chapter in the Bible read, and in the prayers that follow this, all join devoutly enough. In all my experience no Boer ever lied to me, or prevaricated in any smallest particular."

The independence of the Orange Free State has always been unquestioned. In it there were no mines; at least from its district containing the diamond mines it had been ousted by a transaction faintly, if at all, defended. The Transvaal at a time of trouble was annexed by a snap act of the British Governor at the Cape, but the Republicans resisted violently, and resistance culminated in war and Majuba Hill, after which the Republic was restored. By the Convention of 1881, concluded between the British Government and that of the Transvaal, as two contracting States, "complete self-government" in domestic affairs was assured to the Transvaal, the reservations having respect only to its foreign relations. In this Convention



mention is made of the suzerainty of the British Crown. But no mention of suzerainty is found in the subsequent Convention of 1884, and it seems proved that Lord Derby, then Colonial Minister, intended to drop the phrase. The Transvaal Republic had ever since been carried on and treated as an independent State, though subject with regard to any foreign alliances to the veto of the British Crown.

The Government of the Transvaal had undoubtedly been corrupted by the discovery, fatal to its simplicity, of gold on an immense scale, and the consequent intrusion of schemers from Holland into the Administration. Its head, Paul Kruger, was an ultra Conservative; but he was seventy-three years old, and there was a Liberal party, the leader of which was expected to succeed him. Meantime his political tendency, as a typical Boer, was not to expansion or annexation, but to seclusion, and to the strict maintenance of the Boer idea of society in its pastoral purity against foreign contamination. Ultra Conservatism is bad; political corruption is worse. But were these confined to the Transvaal, or incapable of amendment there by anything but a foreign sword?

Of the Orange Free State, those who knew it well spoke as an almost model commonwealth. Its govern-

ment appears to have been thoroughly good and pure, probably better and purer than our own. It was spending a liberal sum on public education. There does not seem to have been the shadow of a pretext for interfering with it in the interest of political reform, even if one State were qualified and entitled to reform another. A republic it certainly was, and not everybody is partial to republics.

Was there such a lack in the world of refined plutocracy, with its social inequalities and its liabilities to luxury and corruption, that Canada must needs lend a hand in the destruction of these two little pastoral commonwealths with their social equality, their simplicity of life, and their fair hope of development into healthy nations?

Of the Outlanders, for whose political rights this war was ostensibly made, and who were styled, for the purpose of aggression, British subjects, a large number, and the most influential portion, appear to have been Jews. Johannesburg, the city of the Outlanders, we are told by one who knows it well, is essentially a Jewish town. Its population generally was of that roving and unsettled kind which seeks chiefly, not political privilege, but gold. In character it seems to have been the

climax of gold-mining settlements. The trustworthy witness just cited describes it as "one of the most terrible haunts of greed, gambling, and every form of depravity that the world has ever seen." The head of a pastoral and religious commonwealth might excusably resort to strong measures in his anxiety to keep such an intrusion at bay.

That life and property should generally have been safe, in spite of occasional acts of violence, such as the much-bruited but doubtful Edgar case, is rather creditable to the Transvaal police.

Real denizens of Johannesburg were unquestionably suffering under political disabilities, as, before the Reform Bill of 1832, were the people of Manchester and Birmingham. As they grew in number and riches, they would have made their way to political power, all the more surely, perhaps, if there was venality at Pretoria to open the door to gold. In the meantime, and in spite of state imposts and monopolies, the Johannesburger had abundance of that, for which, and not for political privilege, he chiefly cared.

Mr. Rose, who, having worked for three years in the mines, would appear well qualified to tell the truth from the workingman's point of view, enumerates thirty-one

points concerning matters political, military, economical, and social, every one of them of great importance, and deposes that in the vast majority of them we find that from the democratic standpoint not only was the Transvaal Government abreast of that of England, but ahead. The press assuredly was free enough, since it was allowed with impunity to invite foreign invasion.

Of one evil of which the Outlander had to complain, Boer government or religion was not the source. "I regret," writes the British agent at Pretoria, "to say that I myself entirely agree with Mr. Rouliot that all these attacks upon the capitalists here are merely the outcome of the wealthy influence of the Jews, who grow rich in a few years by the enormous profits of the sale of poisonous alcohol to the native labourers in the mines, a traffic which incapacitates perhaps a permanent twelve per cent. out of eighty-eight thousand natives from doing any work." The Boer Legislature is described by the agent as struggling with the evil and threatening to flog the violators of the liquor laws.

The relations of the colonizing and conquering nations to the natives have been bad in South Africa, as elsewhere. This is one of the darkest pages in the annals of man. About the brightest spot in it, perhaps, is Can-



ada's treatment of her Indians. 'The first work of a colonist is the destruction of the wild animals, the worst of which is the wild man.' So said the cynic Roebuck; and, as he said, colonists have done. In one colony poisoned food was used. We are always reading the tidings of some fresh punitive expedition. The Boers had desperate wars with native tribes for the land, in which they were undoubtedly guilty of cruelty for which their present troubles may, perhaps, be deemed retribution. But now the native seems even to prefer the Boer rule to the British. Bishop Colenso said:—

"I have done what I could to dissipate the charge against the Boers of slave-holding, or, rather, slave-making, which, whatever ground there may have been for it in the past, ought not to be brought against the present generation. Rather, I have urged, the simple fact that eight hundred thousand natives were lying under the Boer Government, without taking to flight, or running over to Natal for protection, is enough to show that the accusation against the Boers of ill-treating the natives under their rule must be grossly exaggerated, and that, to all appearance, they even prefer the Boer rule to our own." This, then, was hardly a cause for war.

Whether the Kaffir will benefit by being transferred to the dominion of the Rhodesian Ring seems doubtful. The policy of that party looks very like slavery thinly veiled and called by a fair name. Mr. Rudd, described as Mr. Rhodes's right-hand man, says: "If, under the cry of civilization, we in Egypt lately mowed down ten thousand or twenty thousand Dervishes with Maxims, surely it cannot be considered a hardship to compel the natives in South Africa to give three months in the year to do a little honest work?" What power would there be to guarantee that with those three months the compulsion would come to an end? The plain of Omdurman, covered with wounded Dervishes, writhing in their agony, with wounds untended and without water, under a burning sun, may be thought a strange starting-place for the march of Christian and philanthropic civilization.

In the course of this debate it has more than once cropped up in certain quarters that "equal right," the professed object of the war, is intended only for white men; an ominous intimation for an Empire, five-sixths of the population of which are coloured, and whose ally is Japan. Such, however, is the growing sentiment.

England prides herself on having abolished slavery. Is it certain that she would do it now?

In the craving of the mine-owners of Johannesburg for labour forced and cheap we see, so far as they are concerned, the main object of the war.

In the Cape Colony the relation between British and Dutch was something like that between British and French in Canada, calling for the same policy of impartiality and mediation on the part of the British Governor. Such a policy in the hands of a wise and honourable Governor, as Sir Hercules Robinson seems to have been, was having its effect. An Englishman could be elected by Africander constituents. A Cape Parliament with an Africander majority had shown loyalty by voting a contribution to the British navy. In the Cape Colony, no doubt, as here, the sentiment of race entered into political party. In party contests angry things were said, and wild ideas were vented by wild thinkers. Hints were thus furnished for the figment of a great Dutch conspiracy organized for the expulsion of the British from South Africa, of which no substantial evidence has ever been produced, and in the existence of which no cool-headed observer seems to have seriously believed. It was

natural that the Dutch of Cape Colony should look with sympathy on the two kindred commonwealths, and cherish their existence as a political support. Any attack on the independence of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State could not fail to stir the hearts of their Dutch kinsmen in Cape Colony. This, to genuine statesmanship, would surely have presented itself as a reason, not for threatening that independence, but for showing clearly that no assault on it was intended.

Mr. Cecil Rhodes was at once a capitalist and a politician. As a capitalist, he, with his Ring, wanted the command of the Transvaal mines, and of the labour by which they were to be worked. As a politician, he wanted to "paint the map of South Africa red," and fancied that Heaven had chosen him as its instrument for that purpose. The two aims were combined in his saying that "the British flag was a great asset." On the path of his commercial cupidity, the independence of the Transvaal, on the path of his political ambition the independence of both the South African republics alike stood in his way. Nothing is more certain than that the design of this man, who was the soul of the whole business, was one which involved the destruction of these two commonwealths; immediately that of the



Transvaal, but also, in the end, that of the Orange Free State, against which no charge of political abuses or malfeasance of any kind had been, or could be, brought. Whether in place of the two Republican Governments he and his confederates would really have installed the constitutional liberties of Great Britain may well be doubted. They were quite as likely to have installed their own capitalist domination, with corruption, perhaps, not less heinous than that of which Kruger was accused. The rule of the Chartered Company, so far as it has prevailed, is said not to have promised perfection on the British model. Apparently in order to provide himself with Parliamentary support in any equivocal course which he might be led to take, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, the Empire-builder, subscribed fifty thousand dollars to the Irish Nationalist fund formed for the dismemberment of the United Kingdom. His panegyrists tell us that he was not "good," but "great." To separate greatness from goodness, and give greatness the preference, is the growing fashion of the day.

The first blow struck at the independence of the Transvaal Republic was the Jameson Raid, the force for which Mr. Cecil Rhodes, then Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, collected under false pretences and furn-

ished to Dr. Jameson, his partner in the conspiracy, and the leader of the Raid. Of Mr. Rhodes's conduct in this affair, Mr. Lecky, the eminent historian, a supporter of the Government and of the war, writes thus ("The Map of Life," pp. 187-8) :—

“When holding the highly confidential position of Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and being at the same time a Privy Councillor of the Queen, he engaged in a conspiracy for the overthrow of the government of a neighbouring and friendly State. In order to carry out this design he deceived the High Commissioner, whose Prime Minister he was. He deceived his own colleagues in the Ministry. He collected under false pretences a force which was intended to co-operate with an insurrection in Johannesburg. Being a Director of the Chartered Company, he made use of that position, without the knowledge of his colleagues, to further the conspiracy. He took an active and secret part in smuggling great quantities of arms into the Transvaal, which were intended to be used in the rebellion; and at a time when his organs in the press were representing Johannesburg as seething with spontaneous indignation against an oppressive government, he, with another millionaire, was secretly expending many thousands of pounds in

that town in stimulating and subsidising the rising. He was also directly connected with the shabbiest incident in the whole affair, the concoction of a letter from the Johannesburg conspirators absurdly representing English women and children at Johannesburg as in danger of being shot down by the Boers, and urging the British to come out at once to save them. It was a letter drawn up with the sanction of Mr. Rhodes many weeks before the Raid, and before any disturbance had arisen, and kept in reserve to be dated and used in the last moment for the purpose of inducing the young soldiers in South Africa to join in the Raid, and of subsequently justifying their conduct before the War Office, and also for the purpose of being published in the English press at the same time as the first news of the Raid, in order to work upon English public opinion, and persuade the English people that the Raid, though technically wrong, was morally justifiable."

All this was perfectly borne out by the report of an investigating committee of the House of Commons, which found Mr. Cecil Rhodes, as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, guilty of "subsidising, organizing, and stimulating an armed insurrection against the Government of the South African Republics;" of "grave breaches of

duty to those to whom he owed allegiance," and of "deceiving the High Commissioner representing the Imperial Government," as well as of dishonest concealment of his views from his colleagues in the government and on the board of his company. More would have come to light had justice been allowed its course. But, says the "Annual Register":—

"The general feeling was that the proceedings had been conducted with singular laxity or want of skill. Those interested in keeping secret the true history of the Raid were entirely successful, and it was generally by the merest chance that any fact of importance was elicited from the witnesses. The representatives of the Opposition, Sir William Harcourt, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, and Mr. Buxton, were, after Mr. Rhodes had been unaccountably permitted to quit England, willing to allow the breakdown of the proceedings; and, what was even more surprising in so strict a Parliamentarian as Sir William Harcourt, a witness was allowed to treat the committee with defiance, and to pass unchecked. To a very great extent the inquiry had been obviously factitious, but in whose interest concealment was considered necessary, remained undivulged. It was surmised that reasons of State had been found which out-



weighed party considerations, and that the leaders of the Opposition had been privately convinced that the alleged grounds were sufficient for the course adopted." (Pp. 133-134, 1897.)

Over the whole of this history in all its stages is the trail of intrigue and conspiracy, as well as of commercial greed. In no part of it is seen the work of high-minded English statesmanship, ever true to good faith and honour. Yet we talk of the cunning of old Kruger.

The Johannesburgers, whose co-operation was expected by Rhodes and Jameson, having apparently no sense of wrong sufficient to rouse them to vengeance, failed to rise. The Raid miscarried. Jameson and his companions were taken prisoners by the Boers. The behaviour of Kruger was magnanimous. He imposed slight penalties on the Johannesburgers who had taken part in the plot. Jameson and the Raiders, whom he would have been justified in hanging, and whom the British Government would have hanged, had they been Boers raiding on its dominions, he handed over to the British Government. The High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, bore strong testimony to his moderation, which we can still better appreciate now that it is contrasted with the hangings, imprisonments, finings, and

disfranchisements of Dutch patriots under martial law in the Cape Colony.

The British Government could do no less than put the Raiders on their trial. It prosecuted them under the Foreign Enlistment Act, marking thereby the character of the Transvaal as a foreign nation. But it let them off with a trifling penalty ; though, had they got the Outlanders to rise, the Transvaal would have been deluged with blood. The inquiry into the history of the Raid was cut short for reasons which have not been disclosed, but which must have been important, and can hardly have been identical with the ends of justice. Rhodes, convicted of infamously betraying the honour of the Crown, was retained in the Privy Council, welcomed by Royalty, idolized by Oxford. Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, came forward to say that Rhodes had done nothing at variance with personal honour, thereby naturally drawing suspicion on himself. The conspirators had, at all events, manifestly counted on his sympathy, and there had apparently been communication between somebody in his office and the office of the great journal which had descended from the eminence won by a grand defence of the integrity of the United Kingdom to be the English centre of Rhodesian intrigue.

Public sympathy was manifestly with the Raiders, and execration of Gladstone for having recognized the independence of the Transvaal mingled with murmurs of vengeance for Majuba Hill. Vengeance for Majuba Hill was no small factor in the matter. Perhaps it was even the greatest factor, so far as the multitude was concerned. Natural it might be; but it was not, any more than Mr. Rhodes's "great asset," identical with the desire of political justice or of spreading higher civilization. With it mingled in the Imperialist breast love of dominion and the worship of the flag.

The American conqueror, in dealing, as we see that he deals, with the Filipinos, can flatter himself that he is performing a task imposed upon him by Heaven, that he is taking up the white man's burden and grasping the hand of Destiny with that of Duty. Another excuse for rapine is fatality. Between the British and the Dutch of the South African Republics, we are told, there was an incompatibility which made war inevitable; the same fatal necessity, it is to be presumed, leading to breach of solemn covenants and a long train of unprincipled intrigue. Yet, the prize having been grasped, the incompatibility vanishes, and it is found that the Boers will make excellent and congenial fellow-citizens.

The retention of Cecil Rhodes in the Privy Council, the homage paid to him by Royalty, the Colonial Secretary's defence of his treason, the practical impunity of the Jameson Raiders, and the favour shown them by the public, were surely proof enough that national faith and honour had ceased to bind, and that machinations for the destruction of South African independence would soon be, if they were not already, on foot. If, instead of the little Transvaal Republic, a great power had been invaded by British buccaneers, would it not on seeing the practical condonation, not to say approval, of the outrage by the British Government and the British people, have demanded explanations, and, in default of them, have withdrawn its Ambassador and prepared for war?

Kruger now armed. That he had not before armed to any extraordinary or threatening extent seems to be clearly proved by a report made to the British Government on Boer armaments, stating that the Boers had only thirteen thousand rifles; as well as by the evidence of a private observer, who found their artillery obsolete and worthless; perhaps still more decisively by the fact that Rhodes and Jameson had ventured upon the invasion of the Transvaal with a force of five hundred men and



with no further support beyond the hope of a rising among the unmilitary population of Johannesburg.

The buccaneering Raid had collapsed. So far the divine command to Mr. Cecil Rhodes to paint the map of South Africa red, and fully utilize the British flag as an asset, had failed of its fulfilment. A raid of a more constitutional kind was now to be made in the name and with the forces of the British Empire. The movers in this second raid were Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, and Sir Alfred Milner, the new High Commissioner at the Cape, in practical co-operation with Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who had been allowed to return to the field of his operations, and with the capitalists of Johannesburg, his allies. Mr. Chamberlain was a man of eminent ability, especially of the gladiatorial kind; once a socialistic Radical, now member of a Government of the opposite party, and taking the high Imperialist line. Gladstone is said to have described him as the first politician of the American type that England had produced, a phrase hardly just to the Americans, who had their Alexander Hamilton, as well as their Aaron Burr. Sir Alfred Milner was a highly distinguished bureaucrat and skilful writer of despatches. To the peculiar community entrusted to his hands at a critical

juncture, he was a stranger. It is evident from his correspondence at the time, and from the feelings which he has invariably betrayed, that instead of acting as an impartial mediator, he presently threw himself, as did Sir Francis Bond Head, into the arms of a party and regarded the Dutch in the colony with antipathy and suspicion. He was the persistent advocate of a policy of extreme measures, and to the last he remained the chief obstacle to a reasonable and generous peace. When he had ceased to be the Governor of Cape Colony and to have any constitutional right of interference in its political concerns, he attempted by his private influence to bring about a suspension of its constitution, and when frustrated in that attempt, he still persisted in the recommendation. In his addiction to a policy of force he was contravening the opinion of his constitutional advisers, and thus violating the right of colonial self-government. Dutch colonists put to death for disaffection to such a rule might be technically guilty of rebellion, morally would they not be murdered?

The Colonial Office now at all events comes openly to the front. The assumption of the question by that office in place of the Foreign Office, was in itself a sign of the course which the policy was to take. Nothing

could be more certain than that the relation of the Transvaal to Great Britain was that of a foreign State. The Jameson Raiders had been tried under the Foreign Enlistment Act, for fitting out an expedition against a foreign State at peace with Great Britain. The Lord Chief Justice had on that occasion defined the Transvaal as a "foreign State with which Her Majesty was in friendly treaty relations." He said, "The position of the South African Republic . . . . is determined by the two Conventions of 1881 and 1884. The result is that under these conventions the Queen's Government recognize the complete independence and autonomy of the South African Republic, subject only to the restriction contained in the Convention of 1884, to the effect that that State should have no power to enter into any treaties without this country's consent, except as regards one or two minor States, one of which is the Orange Free State." Lord Salisbury said (January 31st, 1896), "They [the Boers] have absolute control over their own internal affairs." Mr. W. H. Smith, the Conservative leader of the House of Commons, said, "It is a cardinal principle of that settlement [the Convention of 1884] that the internal government and legislation of the South African Republic shall not be interfered with."

Mr. Balfour said (January 15th, 1896), "The Transvaal is a free and independent government as regards its internal affairs." Mr. Chamberlain founded his interference with the Transvaal franchise on the right of all governments to protect the interests of their subjects in a foreign country; and the strangeness of the argument does not weaken the force of the implication. This assumption that the Boer States were colonial dependencies, manifestly unfounded as it was, pervaded the whole conduct of the Colonial Office, and was used, when the Boers had been worsted in the war, to treat them, not as belligerents, but as rebels, and hold them liable to the penalties of rebellion.

Lord Salisbury, who combined the Foreign Secretaryship with the Premiership, and to whom it properly belonged to deal with a foreign State, was at all events a statesman, not of the American, but of the old English school, and had the question been in his hands, there would probably have been no war. But he apparently was overburdened with other work, and exercised little control. His utterances, when he did speak, came like voices from afar. He was so much in the dark as to say that his Government did not seek territories or mines.



The South African press, both at Johannesburg and at Cape Town, was bought by Rhodes and the capitalists of his circle. Its venal utterances were sent home by the High Commissioner and reproduced by accomplices in the London press as authentic expressions of South African opinion. One of the proprietors of an English journal specially responsible for egging on the country to the war, is stated to have been a large shareholder in the Chartered Company.

It seems impossible that the corruption of the South African press by the Rhodesian wing should have escaped the knowledge of the Lord High Commissioner, or that, reading those journals, he should have failed to understand their spirit, discern their aim, and become aware of the conspiracy which was on foot. Quotations from them have been republished, the drift of which shows plainly that the object for which they were hired was not political enfranchisement or reform, but the destruction of Transvaal independence by the force of British arms.

The ground chosen for a quarrel was that of the Transvaal franchise. Not only were the Outlanders intensely uncongenial to the Boer State, but many of them were actively disaffected, and some of them had

been accomplices in the Raid. The Transvaal Government, therefore, can hardly be said to have acted criminally, even if it acted unwisely, in putting off their admission to political power by requiring a long term for naturalization; though its law in this respect was hardly less liberal than that of Great Britain, which requires not only a term of five years' residence, but the consent of the Secretary of State. However, supposing that the condition of the franchise in the Transvaal had been as bad as, well within living memory, it had been in Great Britain, the British Government had not the shadow of a right to interfere. "Complete self-government" had been solemnly guaranteed by convention to the Transvaal Republic. Complete self-government, of course, included the regulation of the political franchise. Mr. Chamberlain had himself said that "we did not claim, and never had claimed, the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal," and that "to go to war with President Kruger in order to force upon him reforms in the internal affairs of his State, with which successive Secretaries of State standing in that place had repudiated all right of interference, would have been a course of action as immoral as it would have been unwise."

It is surprising that in face of such an avowal the same statesman should proceed, in concert with Sir Alfred Milner, to press upon the Transvaal Government the extension of its franchise to men who were its avowed enemies, and who, there were the strongest reasons for believing, would have used their franchise for its subversion.

The term suzerainty, although it was used in the Convention of 1881 to describe the relation between Great Britain and the Transvaal Republic, was not used in the Convention of 1884, and it seems clear that Lord Derby, then Foreign Secretary, and, as such, properly dealing with the Transvaal Republic, had marked the term for deletion. Independent jurists pronounced the claim to suzerainty invalid. Sir Edward Clark, formerly a Conservative Solicitor-General, called it a breach of national faith. "Suzerainty of England over the Transvaal abolished; England only reserving the right of veto on treaties with foreign powers, except with the Free State and the northern Kaffir tribes"—thus does the "Annual Register," describe that result of the Convention of 1884. But if the suzerainty had really existed, it would have applied only to foreign relations, not to internal institutions, such as

the political franchise. The Transvaal Government tendered arbitration, which was rejected on the strange ground that submission to foreign arbitration would have been a disclaimer of suzerainty. It was evident that only foreign arbitration could be impartial. What would any honourable man desire more than a fair opinion on a question in dispute between him and another, especially if that other were weak and at his mercy? Sir Conan Doyle says, "to consent to arbitration would have been to give away the whole case." To submit an untenable claim to an independent tribunal is, no doubt, in a certain sense to give it away, though such a plea for declining impartial judgment is not commonly heard.

Kruger made a great mistake in allowing the question of the franchise, or any question of internal policy, to be raised at all. He ought to have firmly taken his stand on the covenant of "complete self-government," supported by the unequivocal admissions of British Ministers and judges. He did, however, allow the question to be raised, showing thereby, at all events, that he wished to avoid war. At one time there was an approximation to an agreement. Nine-tenths of the matter in dispute, by the Colonial Secretary's own avowal, had been settled,

and it was asked in amazement whether we were to go to war for the tenth part. The party bent on war was apparently alarmed by the approximation. The Colonial Office, at all events, drew off.

Sir Alfred Milner was all the time doing his utmost to inflame his Government and dispose it to "extreme measures." His "irreducible minimum," involving the surrender by the Transvaal of its self-government, when backed by the concentration of troops, which he refused to withdraw, was war; it would have been so treated by any State capable of asserting its independence. Kruger's "ultimatum," as it is called, though maladroitly framed by the pastoral Boer, was merely the acceptance of war. It only anticipated the blow of an arm that was raised to strike. The British Government was calling out its reserves, more troops were coming, and Kruger was not bound to await the arrival of the enemy in full force. Finding himself at war, he, for military reasons, decided to attack. It may be that he had better have preferred to any military advantage the moral advantage of remaining strictly on the defensive. But this, at all events, was a different thing from "invading Her Majesty's dominions," in the sense in which that phrase has been used to present him as an unprovoked



aggressor, and to fire all Her Majesty's subjects with zeal for the war.

The Orange Free State, the character of whose government was unimpeached and whose independence was not directly threatened, cast in its lot at once with the Transvaal, and showed fully as much spirit in the war as the Transvaal itself. The burghers of the State could not fail, through the cloud of diplomatic mystification, to see what was the real aim. They well knew that what was sought was not the political reform of the Transvaal, but the extension of British dominion by the destruction of Boer independence.

"Three years ago I made a raid, and everyone said I was wrong. Now the Queen's Government are preparing another raid, and everybody says they are right." So Mr. Rhodes was reported to have said, and if he did, his words were true.

In fact, from the moment when the first shot was fired, nothing more was heard of the franchise question. The suppression of Boer independence, even to the last "shred," the extension of British supremacy over the whole of South Africa, and the possession of the mines, combined with revenge for Majuba Hill, became the avowed, as they had been from the beginning the real,

objects of the war. When the depression following our early reverses created a need for a strong stimulant, we were told of a dark conspiracy formed by this scattered population of farmers, without any regular force other than a small corps of artillery, for the invasion of the British Empire. The invention had the desired effect, especially here in Canada, where it was, and probably still is, the general belief that we were engaged in a defensive war, brought on by an unprovoked and causeless invasion of the Queen's dominions. To such delusions and deceptions, in spite of all our political instructors and organs of publicity, are we still exposed.

The world could hardly be expected to believe that a nation whose own franchise is limited, which has a hereditary House of Lords, which holds in subjection the vast population of Hindostan, and which went to war to uphold Turkish despotism, was so transported with indignation at the restriction of suffrage in the Transvaal, that bursting through the bonds of its solemn and repeated covenants, it flew to arms to redress the wrong.

How was Canada drawn for the first time since her attainment of self-government, into an Imperial war, and one to which she had no special incitement, these poor farmers of South Africa never having done her, or

been capable of doing her, any kind of wrong? Her Premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, was the worthy representative of a race, the history of which resembled that of the Dutch in South Africa. Conquered, and politically depressed by the conquerors, it had been forced to strike for its rights, which, after a struggle, it had won. In the British loyalists at Cape Colony, pouring out their vengeance on the rebels, Sir Wilfrid Laurier might see the counterparts of the British loyalists in Canada, who, because they were not allowed to set their feet on the neck of the French-Canadian, stoned the Governor-General and set fire to the Parliament House at Montreal. As an heir of the cause and principles of Papineau, Sir Wilfrid in former days said things which loyalism did not applaud. He pleaded with fervid eloquence the cause of the French Half-breeds who had risen in the North-West, and not less warmly denounced the execution of Riel, though Riel had a perfectly fair trial and was not put to death, like the disaffected colonists in the Cape Colony, by the lawless process of military execution styled martial law.

Just what Mr. Cecil Rhodes, Mr. Chamberlain, and Lord Milner destined for the Dutch in South Africa, Imperial ambition had destined for the French-Can-

dians here. "I entertain," said Lord Durham, "no doubts as to the national character which must be given to Lower Canada; it must be that of the British Empire, that of the majority of the population of British America, that of the great race which must in the lapse of no long period of time be predominant over the whole North American Continent." "Henceforth," he goes on to say, "it must be the first and steady purpose of the British Government to establish an English population, with English laws and language, in this province, and to limit its government to none but a decidedly English Legislature." Is not this precisely the principle as the result of acting upon which the happy commonwealths of South Africa have been turned into a waste?

We are told, in fact, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was inclined to keep out of the war, but was drawn into it through an agitation favoured by the Governor-General and the Commander of the Militia, who did not shrink even from influencing the press. If it was so, the Governor-General and the Commander of the Militia surely exceeded their duty. There have been occasions on which a Governor-General, as guardian of the constitution and of the honour of the Crown, might have interposed properly and with good effect, but there can

be no excuse for any use of influence against the policy of a responsible government, or for anything like interfering with the press.

What was the cause of war proclaimed to the Canadian people as the moral warrant for their participation? It was comprised in the following resolutions:—

“1. Resolved, That this House has viewed with regret the complications which have arisen in the Transvaal Republic, of which Her Majesty is Suzerain, from the refusal to accord to Her Majesty’s subjects now settled in that region any adequate participation in its government.

“2. Resolved, That this House has learned with still greater regret that the condition of things there existing has resulted in intolerable oppression, and has produced great and dangerous excitement among several classes of Her Majesty’s subjects in her South African possessions.

“3. Resolved, That this House, representing a people which has largely succeeded, by the adoption of the principle of conceding equal political rights to every portion of the population, in harmonizing estrangements, and in producing general content with the existing system of government, desires to express its sympathy with the



efforts of Her Majesty's Imperial authorities to obtain for the subjects of Her Majesty who have taken up their abode in the Transvaal, such measure of justice and political recognition as may be found necessary to secure them in the full possession of equal rights and liberties."

The framers of these resolutions, the last two of which are corollaries of the first, must have well known that the existence of the suzerainty was denied by independent jurists; that even a Conservative ex-Solicitor-General had pronounced its assertion a breach of faith; and that the government of the Transvaal had tendered fair arbitration, which the British Government had refused. But at all events the Transvaal had been formally and repeatedly designated as a "foreign State," and "complete self-government" had been guaranteed to it. By what right, then, did the framers of the resolutions suppose, could "Her Majesty's subjects" claim participation in its government? What should we say if the American Government were to claim for its citizens now pouring into British Columbia and the North-West, participation in the government of Canada? But, before this resolution could have reached England, the question of the Transvaal franchise had been dropped, and the real objects of the war, extension of British dominion

over South Africa and command of the mines, had stood clearly revealed. To state fairly to the people of Canada the justification of a war against a community which had done them no wrong, was one clear duty of the members of the Canadian Parliament. Another, and a point surely of their own honour, if honour has its abode in those halls, was to secure to the national conscience the means of enlightenment by upholding the freedom of debate. It is needless to say how this second duty was performed.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the politicians at Ottawa generally had received a clear enough intimation of one of the real causes of war. They had been approached by an emissary of the South African Company in the interest of that financial corporation. They ought at once to have shown this gentleman the door, giving him to understand that blood was not to be shed or public policy perverted for the profit of any commercial Ring. What such an agent's relation with the Colonial Office or the communications of the Colonial Office with the Canadian Government may have been, is a matter respecting which we are still in the dark. If there is anything which can appeal to the conscience and honour of a statesman at the head of a nation for disregard of

every influence but those of the public weal, of justice, and of humanity, it is surely a question of peace or war.

When the Canadian House of Commons is hurried into such transports of loyalty on the subject of the war in South Africa as to howl down freedom of debate, on which its authority and dignity rest, we cannot help remembering that it was once rebuked by the Queen's Government for passing a resolution of sympathy with Home Rule. The integrity of the United Kingdom, the very heart and centre of the whole Empire, which Home Rule threatened, was surely as much a matter of concern to all the members of the Empire as the relation between the British Crown and the Government of the Transvaal Republic.

Of the French-Canadians it may safely be said that nine-tenths had no wish to participate in the war. But the Minister who took us into the war was a French-Canadian, and he drew with him the French politicians in the Parliament of the Dominion. The sentiment of French Canada was thus veiled or misrepresented. Mr. Bourassa, who had the courage to stand up alone for the genuine opinion of his Province, though his voice was drowned at Ottawa, found on

appealing to his constituency that his compatriots were on his side.

War having begun, the war fever, as usual, set in. The spirit of adventure fired our valiant youth and hurried them to the field, where many of them earned distinction. That their military merits are independent of the conduct of the politicians and of the justice of the war, it is needless to repeat. But in the course of the war they were set to work from which we are glad to know that some of them recoiled. The correspondent of an English paper with the army writes:

“In ten miles we have burned no fewer than six farm houses; the wife watched from a sick husband’s bedside the burning of her home a hundred yards away. It seems as though a kind of domestic murder were being committed. I stood there till late last night and saw the flames lick round each piece of poor furniture—the chairs and tables, the baby’s cradle, the chest of drawers containing a world of treasure, and when I saw the poor housewife’s face pressed against the window of the neighbouring house, my own heart burned with a sense of outrage. The effect on the colonial troops who are gratifying their feelings of hatred and revenge, is very bad. They swarm into the houses, loot-

ing and destroying, and filling the air with high-sounding cries of vengeance. Why burn the houses? The ends achieved are so small. Punishment could be otherwise inflicted. If I described one-half of the little things which I saw in the process of destruction, I should be accused of sentimentalizing.”

Cecil Rhodes, it is understood, undertook to assure the British Ministry that if they would press the Transvaal Government resolutely, there would be no fighting. If he did, knowing well, as he must have done, the extent of Transvaal armaments, this is further proof that Kruger had not armed for offensive war. Little, however, did Rhodes or the British Ministers dream what fighting there would be. They had taken account of military, not of moral force. Two communities of farmers, whose total Boer population, according to the best authorities, did not exceed one hundred and fifty thousand, held out for two years and a half against the whole British Empire, the resources of which were boundless, which had all the military science of the day at its command, which had entire control of the sea, and put into the field against them an army of two hundred and fifty thousand men. There had been no such fight for freedom since the ancestors of the Boers fought for



their freedom against Spain. Even in that case the odds were nothing like so great, for the Dutch, inferior in discipline, were very superior in numbers to the Spaniards, and masters of the sea. The uprising was universal as well as enthusiastic. Childhood fought by the side of grey-haired age. "Nearby," says a witness of one of the fights, "lay an old man with a white beard. His son of fourteen, whose entire hip-bone, torn bare by a shell, was exposed to the sun and the flies, had dragged himself by and was holding a blanket to shield his dying father's head from the heat. Both seemed to have upon their faces an expression of quiet resignation, and none of anger or regret." This was not the only picture of the kind sent us. The women vied in heroism and self-sacrifice with the men. Freely they gave for the cause of independence all they possessed and all they loved. Those who know them best say that they will hand down to their offspring perpetual memory of the struggle, and undying hatred of the conqueror's rule.

"Beloved husband," said the wife of a Boer in a letter which was picked up, "the British are in sight, and the bombs are already coming over our house. Now I know, like you, what it is to be under shell-fire. If I am

taken, do not think of me; fight on to the very last, and God keep you in safety.”

Could Kruger, or any despot that ever existed, have called forth such an outburst of devotion? Could anything have called it forth but that love of liberty, which is our own glory and boast, burning in rugged breasts but with its intensest flame? These men are now ranked as our fellow-citizens, and there can be no treason in giving them their due.

That the general heart of humanity should beat with sympathy for two little commonwealths, gallantly struggling for liberty against overwhelming force, was inevitable, and it is useless to ascribe the universal impulse of nature to mere jealousy of Great Britain. The governments, of course, refused to interfere. If they were hostile to England, nothing could suit them better than the expenditure of her forces on a protracted and inglorious war. But the people were upon the side of the patriot Boers. They rejoiced in his successes, and mourned for his fall. There was, perhaps, an exception in the case of a part of the people of the United States, into whose own hearts the poison of conquest had suddenly found its way. Still, the preponderance of American sentiment was in favour of the Boers. The plutocracy

of New York is hardly to be reckoned as American. It has taken hold of the skirt of British aristocracy and renounced the Declaration of Independence.

“War is hell,” and in every hell there are fiends. Some of the Boers, it seems, did break the laws of war. Some of them looted in Natal. Some of them misused the white flag, though the misuse may not always have been wilful. Countercharges have been brought against the other side of the misuse of the red cross, which, if it occurred, must certainly have been accidental. Khaki, for wearing which jingos would have had Boer prisoners shot, is not the British uniform. The British uniform is red; khaki is a defensive color, the use of which, like that of a cuirass or a helmet, was surely open to all. The Boers never were, properly speaking, guerillas; they were always under regular command. But had they been guerillas, those who wanted to shoot them in cold blood on that account were confronted by Wellington’s letter of fervent praise accompanying the honorary gifts of the Prince Regent to the guerillas of Spain, and specially commending the continuance of national resistance after the overthrow of the regular armies in the field. For some excesses the Boers, when their homes were being burned and their women and

children turned out homeless or transported to unwholesome camps, might plead the excuse of maddening provocation. In like case, perhaps, the temper of our own people might give way. To the general observance by the Boers of the rules of civilized war, especially to their humane treatment of wounded prisoners, the testimony of British commanders is conclusive. Even when they, perfectly fair belligerents, fighting in what to them was the holiest of causes, had by a monstrous proclamation been declared rebels, out of the pale of the laws of war, there was no disregard of the laws of war upon their part. The execution of their brethren and allies did not provoke them to reprisals, as military men in England naturally feared that it would. They might have done with Johannesburg or Pretoria as the Russians did with Moscow. But they left both untouched and refrained from the destruction of the mines.

In the war of 1881 "the Boers were charged, on the authority of an alleged eye-witness, with shooting the wounded, and the London streets were full of newspaper placards with 'Boer Atrocities.' Later on, however, General Colley telegraphed that the Boers had 'treated the wounded with courage and humanity.' " (*Annual Register*, 1881, p. 380). On the same occasion General Colley

said, in an address issued to his troops, "We must be careful to avoid punishing the innocent for the guilty, and must remember that, though misled and deluded, the Boers are in the main a brave and high-spirited people, and are actuated by feelings which are entitled to our respect."

Lord Roberts said of the Boers, "They are brave men, large-hearted, generous, and respect their enemies; . . . .we have never in the field met a braver enemy than the Boers."

How was the war waged on our side? While the Boer was successful and had a number of British prisoners in his hands, he was recognized as a regular belligerent. When fortune left him, he, for defending his fatherland against an invader, was proclaimed a rebel, though the proclamation had to be withdrawn amid universal reprobation. His farm was burned, his wife and children were penned in pestilential camps, and at one time put on low rations because the husband and father was in the field. Non-combatants were carried as hostages on military railway trains as protection from derailment. It seems that, all disclaimers notwithstanding, Kaffirs were largely employed for purposes of war. The execution of Commandant Scheepers, captured while sick and



wounded in hospital, after trial before a court of three officers of minor rank, called forth protests which appear to have been well founded, and in which some of our own military men are said to have joined.

In the Cape Colony, martial law was proclaimed, and the fury of the loyalists was let loose upon the Dutch who had more or less actively shown their sympathy for the Boer in what was, in fact, a common struggle for political existence. Many Dutchmen were put to death under martial law, by the sentence of military tribunals, organs of the inflamed passions of a hostile race. Many more were fined, imprisoned, or disfranchised and reduced to political helotage. People were driven to see their friends and relatives hanged. Most tragical was the execution of Willie Louw, a young man, the son of an aged clergyman, exemplary in conduct, holding a Sunday School for the coloured people on his farm. He was engaged to be married, and very dear to his domestic circle. He died with pathetic piety and resignation. Such executions are not forgotten. Worse things still would have been done, and the honour of Great Britain would have been still more deeply tarnished, had not the Liberal party in England interposed to save it by enforcing the amendment of the

prison-camps, and rebuking the fury of the jingo rabble which was always clamouring for violence and blood. The Premier of New Zealand, Mr. Seddon, would have set the Maori on the Boers, exulting in the thought that then no quarter would be given. England, hereafter, in a calmer mood, will be grateful to the memory of the public men who braved the passion of the hour and sacrificed their political position in what they deemed the real interests of their own country, as well as in that of humanity at large. Had these men lived in the fifteenth century, they might have protested against the burning of Joan of Arc and have been not only denounced as traitors, but murdered.

Could such a victory add much lustre to the glorious annals of Great Britain? Can anybody heartily exult in it save those, or such as those, whose favourite toy was the puppet which mocked the agony and death-cry of the wounded Boer? Was it not too aptly celebrated by the enormous drunkenness, lewdness, riot, and outrage of the Mafeking and Peace nights in London? Can a nation plausibly pretend to be the armed champion of civilization while such barbarism is rampant in its own streets?

The world is in danger from the ambition of great powers, threatening, under pretences more or less pious or philanthropic, to crush the smaller nationalities and put an end to the part played by them in the fruitful emulation of free development. Sinister glances are being cast at some small nationalities in Europe, such as Holland and Belgium, as well as in Africa and the East. The noble nationality of little Finland is being already devoured by Russia. In requital the great powers promise the world peace; a peace of submission to their will; a peace which, being all armed to the teeth and full of mutual jealousy, they might find it difficult to keep among themselves. They are impelled not more by the lust of empire than by the commercial greed which led them to contend for the possession of "spheres of influence" in China. Against such a destruction of independence the Boer, and with less effect the Filipino, has entered a protest more telling than all our moral dissertations, which can have little force where morality has so little power. For this protest, whatever we may say, humanity will hereafter be grateful.

We have flattered ourselves that our grand object in killing, burning, and ravaging, was the extension to the oligarchical and corrupt Boer of the political blessings

which, under British institutions, we enjoy. Had we nothing to do in the way of political improvement at home? "Here well-proved accusations of political misconduct are made against our Ministers, and the result is a hypocritical and mendacious defence by the accused, and a generous application of whitewash by the servile party newspapers. Honesty, honour, and political rectitude seem to be regarded as qualities unessential to success in public life, and shifty schemers with their horde of grafters and corruptionists have assumed an air of arrogance that is as debasing as it is disgraceful." So, the other day, said a leading Canadian journal. If anything like this could be said of the politics of the Transvaal, it was because they had been corrupted for the time by the vast discovery of gold, while of the politics of the Orange Free State nothing like this could be said. Out of our own political difficulties we hope in time to find our way by our own efforts; we should not be much helped by foreign invasion.

[We have been made, incidentally, to see the difference between a nation and a dependency, and to know what, under the form of equality, the real position of Canada, as a member of an Imperial Federation, would be. In the Imperial country, notwithstanding the over-

bearing violence of the war party, opinion on the other side continued active and found expression. The national conscience asserted itself in the elections, in Parliamentary divisions, in the press. In the British Parliament, though the war party had an overwhelming majority, there was still freedom of debate. Nor was the influence of the minority unfelt. It put some restraint on sanguinary excesses; it tempered violent counsels; it helped to hold open the door of ultimate peace with foemen of whom a Tory Minister now speaks, not as bandits to be exterminated, but as honest enemies, presently to be our good friends. But Canada, on the other hand, has been simply swept in the train of the dominant party in the Imperial country. In our Parliament free speech has been drowned in clamour. Our public press almost universally has been a transcript of the jingo press of England. Thus the main facts of the case have never been allowed to come before the Canadian people. How many of our people have ever heard of the Conventions; ever heard that self-government as to internal affairs had been guaranteed to the people of the Transvaal, or that British Ministers, Mr. Chamberlain among them, had emphatically recognized the right; ever heard that the claim of



suzerainty was denied by independent jurists; or that arbitration had been tendered by the Transvaal Government and refused? So it would always be under Imperial Federation. Political life and leadership would centre in the Imperial country. The colonies, isolated from each other politically as they must be, would be satellites revolving round the central orb, subservient to Imperial policy, and drawn blindfold into Imperial wars.

The effect of war fever was shown by the silence with which our press received the judgment of Lord Halsbury and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in favour of martial law. What is martial law? Lord Halsbury knows well; for he, as Mr. Gifford, was counsel for Governor Eyre, who was then arraigned for his application of martial law in Jamaica.

In Jamaica there was an antagonism of races like that between the British and the Dutch at the Cape. An affray took place between whites and blacks. The disturbance which ensued was local, nor was any stand made against the troops. That there was no general conspiracy among the blacks was the judgment afterwards formally pronounced by a Royal Commission of Inquiry. But the Governor, who had been in personal collision with the political leader of the blacks, pro-

claimed martial law, and let loose the panic rage of the whites. The lives, liberties, and property of people who, however lowly their condition and whatever their colour, were British subjects, were handed over to courts-martial composed of subaltern officers, which were simply instruments of butchery. No less than four hundred and thirty-nine men and women were put to death, and six hundred were flogged. A hundred lashes was a common number for men, and thirty for women. Piano wires were entwined with the whips. Of those who were flogged with the cat-o'-nine tails, many were women simply charged with stealing. Many people were flogged before they were hanged. "Nelson is hanging like fun by court-martial," wrote the Deputy Adjutant-General. Upwards of a thousand houses were wantonly burned by the military. The butchery, floggings, and burnings went on for twenty-five days after the day on which the Governor had himself proclaimed that the insurrection was at an end. Governor Eyre arrested his political enemy, William Gordon, in a district which was not under martial law, transferred him to a district under martial law, and there had him put to death by a court-martial composed of three subaltern officers, on a charge of treason, upon evidence which the Royal Commission

afterwards pronounced wholly insufficient to establish that charge.

The *Edinburgh Review*, a journal Conservative in its character, protests against Lord Halsbury's judgment. The House of Commons, in which there is an immense Conservative majority, takes up the case of Mr. Cartwright, which was only one of illegal detention, and administers a moral rebuke to the Government. Yet England was practically little concerned. The Colonies are greatly concerned. Notwithstanding which, neither the Parliament, nor the press of Canada has said a word about a decision which puts the life, property, and liberty of the citizen, even when the courts are sitting and a fair trial can be had, out of the protection of the clause of the Great Charter securing to every Englishman judgment by his peers.

Scroggs and Jeffreys have long slept in their graves of infamy. But there is still something to call for the vigilance of the friends of liberty and justice.

What are the fruits of the war? Who gains by it? There will, no doubt, be an immense addition to the profits, already ample, of those "British subjects," most of them, curiously enough, bearing the names of German or Polish Jews, in whose interest the war was made, and

who were described to us as sitting over their wine in the Cape Town hotels, and speculating on the financial outlook while British and Canadian blood was being shed on the field of battle in their interest. It is more than doubtful whether the wages of labour will advance with the profits of capital. Nor does it appear that the moral state of Johannesburg has been improved by the change from Boer to capitalist. The last report is that outrage and drunkenness have increased.

Great Britain has spent in the destruction of the two commonwealths two hundred and twenty millions sterling, with the expenses of resettlement yet to come; besides the losses incurred through the disturbance of South African trade. She has now upon her hands, as has been said, a second Ireland; for the Dutch, though vanquished, are still there, and the partisan disfranchisement of political opponents cannot fail to give occasion to perpetual disaffection. It seems to be taken for granted that it will be necessary to keep an army on the spot for some years to come. South Africa is likely henceforth to be a point of military weakness, and an addition to the causes of alarm which are impelling Great Britain to expend ever more and more of the earnings of her people on armaments and

leading her even to contemplate the necessity of conscription.

The position of King Edward VII. after his victory over the Boers has been compared by a courtly pen to that of Henry V. after Agincourt. The comparison seems somewhat strained. At Agincourt a handful of Englishmen in desperate straits overthrew three or four times their number of enemies. There is, however, one point of resemblance. Henry V., and the Plantagenets before him, while they were squandering the forces of the nation in senseless raids on France, had left an unsettled and hostile Ireland behind them. Nothing could be more certain than that this attack on the independence of the South African commonwealths would revive by sympathy the struggle for the independence of Ireland. King Edward VII., while his armies were in his name laying waste the land of communities six thousand miles off, did not venture to set foot on a natural part of his own dominions. It is remarkable that the Canadian Premier who sent the contingent against the Boers found it wise to propitiate Mr. Redmond, the leader of the Irish Nationalists and an avowed enemy of the union, it might almost be said of Great Britain.



Canada would freely give as a tribute of affection to the mother country the money expended on the contingent. She may be a loser in a greater degree should the policy of the British Government divert emigration to South Africa. But the most serious consequence of the war is its possible effect on the character and aims of our people. Sir Wilfrid Laurier vows that he will not allow Canada to be drawn into the vortex of European militarism. He has only to look round him to see that Canada is on the very edge of that vortex, and in imminent danger of being sucked down. Nor was feasting on a weekly "bag" of Boers likely to improve our national humanity.

It is loudly proclaimed that the war has had an excellent effect in knitting together the different members of the British Empire. Defence against aggression from abroad is sure to produce union at home; that aggressive war has the same happy effect remains yet to be historically proved. American historians are fond of saying that American unity owes its completion to the war of 1812. That war gave birth to the Hartford Convention, brought the republic to the verge of secession, and was presently followed by the furious faction fight, out of which rose the fiercely factious dictatorship

of Jackson. This South African war, owing largely to the personal attitude of Mr. Chamberlain, has broken the bond of fellow-citizenship among the English people themselves, and divided the nation by domestic enmity hardly less bitter than the enmity of civil war.

Imperial Federation, if the promotion of that policy was in any measure the object of this joint attack of Great Britain and her colonies on the two little commonwealths of South Africa, has so far profited little by the result. Held under the most favourable circumstances; with the heat of the war fever still hardly spent; with Colonial troops returning amidst ovations from their victory; with a Colonial Secretary whose political fortunes are embarked in the extension of the Empire; with the monarchical sentiment stimulated to the highest point by the coronation, and the military sentiment excited by martial display, the Colonial Conference has come to nothing. The only outcome of it at least seems likely to be the grant of a subsidy for a fast Atlantic line.

If nationality and national emulation are necessary instruments of human well-being and progress, as has been hitherto assumed, it is a serious thing to kill a nation. From that responsibility those who in good faith

---

and sincere attachment to the interest and honour of their country opposed the destruction of the South African commonwealths have the satisfaction of feeling that they are free.









